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R 117

Subject: Multiple Ejection Bomb Racks for the F-15

Issue: McDonnell-Douglas developed at the Air Force expense nine Multiple Ejection Bomb Racks (MERS) for the F-15. They were tested but never certified by the Air Force for use on the aircraft because the Air Force wished to use the F-15 as an air superiority fighter not a fighter bomber. Three of these racks were subsequently rented to the Israelies together with the technical data package for possible manufacture. So far as we know, the Israelis still have these three racks in their possession.

Points to Make:

-- The French could not build a MERS for the F-15 without access to an F-15 and extensive testing of the rack on the airplane;

-- Because the F-15 is a very high performance aircraft, there are great technical difficulties in building a rack that will eject bombs safely at high speeds and that will allow the airplane to maneuver carrying bombs on the racks;

-- The U.S. Air Force has experienced considerable difficulty in its testing of a MERS system for use with the F-15. In testing the U.S. MERS failed to eject bombs properly, causing a safety hazard;

-- The French cannot obtain an F-15 for testing from the Saudis without our authorization -- this is part of the standard LOA. Clandestine transfer of an F-15 to the French would certainly be detected by American personnel.